



NEWS RELEASE

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OMBUDSMAN REPORTS ON SELF-GOVERNANCE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Provincial Ombudsman Howard Kushner releases today in the legislature Special Report No. 24: "Acting in the Public Interest? Self-Governance in the Health Professions: The Ombudsman's Perspective." The report comments on the 10 years that the Office of the Ombudsman has investigated complaints about the self-governing bodies, or colleges, that regulate professionals in health disciplines. These colleges offer an avenue of complaint to people who have concerns about the conduct of professionals regulated by the colleges.

The report highlights the need for public accountability in the self-governing health professions. Some colleges appear not to fully understand what it means to act in the public interest.

Kushner notes that the Minister of Health Planning will introduce shortly amendments to the **Health Professions Act** that will give government a formal oversight role in the governance of these professions. Kushner supports this initiative, noting that his experience in investigating complaints against the health colleges confirms the need for the special powers the amendments contain.

Kushner said the absence of adequate funding for his office means it is no longer investigating complaints about the colleges, except in special cases. As a result, it will no longer be possible for members of the public or a profession to request reviews of a college's actions from a body that is independent of government.

"A major avenue of public accountability will be lost," Kushner said.

Special Report No. 24 can be viewed at www.ombudsman.bc.ca online.

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